



Testimony of

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Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging

Judiciary Committee

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Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Julia Evans Starr and I am the Executive Director for Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging. I thank you for this opportunity to comment on SB 31.

As you know, Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging is the non-partisan, public policy office of the General Assembly devoted to preparing Connecticut for a significantly changed demographic and enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of older adults. For over twenty years, the Legislative Commission on Aging has served as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for Connecticut's older adults and persons with disabilities.

SB 31: An Act Concerning Continued Delivery of Legal Services to the Poor.

~ CT's Legislative Commission on Aging Supports

The Legislative Commission on Aging supports SB 31, which makes permanent a funding means by which people in our state who are of extremely modest means and few options can receive services thru Legal Aid. In recent past, the Connecticut General Assembly responded to dwindling funding for Legal Aid services to the poor thru legislation in 2009 & 2012. These pieces of legislation established that revenues from court filing fees would be dedicated to Legal Aid services. Unfortunately, the sunset provision for such funding established in the 2012 legislation would go in effect in July 2015. The sunset would have a devastating impact on the number of legal aid staff and dramatically reduce the existing staff's capacity to help low income people of all ages in dire need of often urgent assistance. Our office frequently refers older constituents and their concerned loved ones to Legal Aid for such impactful issues as elder abuse, neglect, exploitation and potential evictions. These people simply need

help! SB 31 would eliminate the sunset provision and establish some funding stability for Legal Aid and the people they serve.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. As always, please contact us with any questions. It's our pleasure and privilege to serve as an objective, nonpartisan resource to you.